

BROWN, TESTER, BEGICH, BURRIS, SPEC-TER and ISAKSON. I am also delighted that Senator SNOWE was an original co-sponsor of this bill and has worked hard in support of it.

Mr. President, this legislation will bring much needed stability and predictability to the VA health care system and consistent, high-quality health care to the veterans and I am delighted with today's action by the Senate.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 129, H.R. 1016, the House companion; that all after the enacting clause be stricken and the text of S. 423 be inserted in lieu thereof; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table; that upon passage of H.R. 1016, S. 423 be returned to the calendar, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill (H.R. 1016), as amended, was read the third time and passed, as follows:

H.R. 1016

Resolved, That the bill from the House of Representatives (H.R. 1016) entitled "An Act to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide advance appropriations authority for certain accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.", do pass with the following amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Title 38, United States Code, authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish hospital and domiciliary care, medical services, nursing home care, and related services to eligible and enrolled veterans, but only to the extent that appropriated resources and facilities are available for such purposes.

(2) For 19 of the past 22 fiscal years, funds have not been appropriated for the Department of Veterans Affairs for the provision of health care as of the commencement of the new fiscal year, causing the Department great challenges in planning and managing care for enrolled veterans, to the detriment of veterans.

(3) The cumulative effect of insufficient, late, and unpredictable funding for the Department for health care endangers the viability of the health care system of the Department and impairs the specialized health care resources the Department requires to maintain and improve the health of sick and disabled veterans.

(4) Appropriations for the health care programs of the Department have too often proven insufficient over the past decade, requiring the Secretary to ration health care and Congress to approve supplemental appropriations for those programs.

(5) Providing sufficient, timely, and predictable funding would ensure the Government meets its obligation to provide health care to sick and disabled veterans and ensure that all

veterans enrolled for health care through the Department have ready access to timely and high quality care.

(6) Providing sufficient, timely, and predictable funding would allow the Department to properly plan for and meet the needs of veterans.

SEC. 3. TWO-FISCAL YEAR BUDGET AUTHORITY FOR CERTAIN MEDICAL CARE ACCOUNTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) TWO-FISCAL YEAR BUDGET AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 113 the following new section:

"§113A. Two-fiscal year budget authority for certain medical care accounts

"(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning with fiscal year 2011, new discretionary budget authority provided in an appropriations Act for the appropriations accounts of the Department specified in subsection (b) shall be made available for the fiscal year involved, and shall include new discretionary budget authority for such appropriations accounts that first become available for the first fiscal year after such fiscal year.

"(b) MEDICAL CARE ACCOUNTS.—The medical care accounts of the Department specified in this subsection are the medical care accounts of the Veterans Health Administration as follows:

"(1) Medical Services.

"(2) Medical Support and Compliance.

"(3) Medical Facilities."

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 1 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 113 the following new item:

"113A. Two-fiscal year budget authority for certain medical care accounts."

SEC. 4. COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES STUDY ON ADEQUACY AND ACCURACY OF BASELINE MODEL PROJECTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR HEALTH CARE EXPENDITURES.

(a) STUDY OF ADEQUACY AND ACCURACY OF BASELINE MODEL PROJECTIONS.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study of the adequacy and accuracy of the budget projections made by the Enrollee Health Care Projection Model, its equivalent, or other methodologies, as utilized for the purpose of estimating and projecting health care expenditures of the Department of Veterans Affairs (in this section referred to as the "Model") with respect to the fiscal year involved and the subsequent four fiscal years.

(b) REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than the date of each year in 2011, 2012, and 2013, on which the President submits the budget request for the next fiscal year under section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, the Comptroller General shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress and to the Secretary a report.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report under this paragraph shall include, for the fiscal year beginning in the year in which such report is submitted, the following:

(A) A statement whether the amount requested in the budget of the President for expenditures of the Department for health care in such fiscal year is consistent with anticipated expenditures of the Department for health care in such fiscal year as determined utilizing the Model.

(B) The basis for such statement.

(C) Such additional information as the Comptroller General determines appropriate.

(3) AVAILABILITY TO THE PUBLIC.—Each report submitted under this subsection shall also be made available to the public.

(4) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term "appropriate committees of Congress" means—

(A) the Committees on Veterans' Affairs, Appropriations, and the Budget of the Senate; and

(B) the Committees on Veterans' Affairs, Appropriations, and the Budget of the House of Representatives.

TO AMEND TITLE XI OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Finance Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3325 and that the Senate then proceed to its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3325) to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to reauthorize for 1 year the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program and the Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security program.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; further that any statements be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 3325) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CAMPUS FIRE SAFETY MONTH

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 40, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will state the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 40) designating September 2009 as "Campus Fire Safety Month."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 40) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 40

Whereas, each year, States across the Nation formally designate September as Campus Fire Safety Month;

Whereas, since January 2000, at least 129 people, including students, parents, and children have died in campus-related fires;

Whereas more than 80 percent of those deaths occurred in off-campus residences;